

## **Early Indicators Of Soldier Abuse**

Drill Sergeants (DS) give the first impression to a soldier about life in the military. They are the first person he will talk about to his or her own soldiers if they become Drill Sergeants. Like my Drill Sergeants and their Drill Sergeants we want to use some of the same training methods or do some of things they did which are no longer acceptable.

Drill Sergeants must embrace roles that the Initial Entry Training (IET) Soldiers in Training (SITs) can relate to and learn from to facilitate today's transforming Army.

The average person may describe a Drill Sergeant as a mean, aggressive person whose whole purpose in life is to make volunteers suffer for their decision to join the Army. This may have been *somewhat* true during my time in Basic and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) because my DS never let up. However, when it was my turn to be a Drill Sergeant I took a different approach to training in the IET environment. I understood when it was time to let up and that it was not my job to make volunteers suffer for their decision to become a soldier.

As a 1SG it was my duty to hold the Drill Sergeants to the same standards. Training was rigorous with the highest standards but could also be fun and enjoyable. We demanded from ourselves that the soldiers be treated with dignity and respect at all times. The Drill Sergeants and I were all those things expected from professional soldiers.

We are governed by policy and regulation and as they change so does the creativity of the Drill Sergeant. This is why I want to focus on unfamiliar abuse indicators. The list below is just a few of the early indicators.

### **Ganging up:**

You have a soldier that makes a mistake or looks around in formation. One DS could easily make the on the spot correction. Instead you have a group of three or four DS surrounding the soldier as if he kicked the drill & ceremony god in the face.

### **Early Wake-ups:**

DS cannot find time to conduct all his duty during the day so he wakes his platoon up before the prescribed time of (05:00). Once he gets warned, the burden falls on the squad leaders to wake the platoon early and get themselves ready with the lights out.

### **The PT Policy:**

The PT policy has become a lot stricter, to the point that we must follow it to the letter. The DS will attempt to circumvent policy since a soldier can run on his own after duty hours, he will tell his weaker soldiers they must run, and tells everyone else that it wouldn't hurt if they ran also.

### **Sucking up the DS air:**

The DS will have all soldiers on the ready line as he walks down the line, for whatever reason, all the soldier turn their heads to the side while sucking in air and holding it in until the DS passes. The DS does not want the soldier breathing on him.

**Controlling food intake:**

The DS knows he cannot tell soldiers what to eat or tell them when they are done, so what can he do? Again he puts the burden on the squad leader. He will instruct the squad leader on how much to eat and has him be the last one to get his food. Once the squad leader eats his small meal and gets up the rest of his platoon follows suit. Mission accomplished!

These are just some of things that leader must look for.

The CSM of the unit must have a trainee abuse prevention program in his unit. This is one of the best ways to prevent trainee abuse by an aggressive education and awareness program.

The initial session should take place in the CSM's office once a new drill signs into the unit. He must understand, be aware and avoid those situations that would compromise their professionalism.

The second part of this program should be the 1SG and CSM checking their unit periodically during the night, especially after midnight.

We must enforce the policy, educate, and assist them when needed.